Limited

W A Y S O F M A N K I N D

A PRELIMINARY REPORT

Community Education Project
San Bernardino Valley College
San Bernardino, California

(August 7, 1953)

Someone leaned over and switched the radio off. A silence hung over the room for a long minute. The sixteen men and women gathered in the comfortable living room gazed thoughtfully at each other; then, a woman stirred in her chair and spoke.

"The Eskimos may have had a tough time surviving in the snow and cold," she said thoughtfully, "but at least they didn't have mental hospitals crowded with people who have found the problems of daily living more than they can handle."

"I agree," a man sitting opposite her declared. "Mental illness is more a threat to our survival here in America than the climate or lack of food."

One by one the other people in the room joined in a discussion of the problem of survival. They considered how mankind everywhere - from the beginning of the human race - has pitted his skill and inventive ingenuity against great odds. Their conversation ranged from the discovery of fire to the development of the new wonder drugs, now bringing under control diseases which have periodically threatened to destroy mankind. The discussion lasted for an hour and a half and then broke up informally over coffee and doughnuts which the hostess brought in.

WHAT WAS THIS ALL ABOUT?

These men and women were participating in a WAYS OF MANKIND home discussion group. On this evening they had listened to a gripping drama - "Survival" - of four men battling to survive in the Arctic after a plane crash. The remarkable technology and Arctic wisdom (possessed by one in the party) worked for them in a suspense-laden struggle to survive, the outcome of which was left to the imagination of those who listened.

The group met regularly on Thursday nights for a period of nine weeks to listen to other programs in the WAYS OF MANKIND series, dramatically portraying "how people live together in different times and places." They listened and then discussed the problems that people face in living together in the modern, complex American society.

This was an <u>informal</u> group of men and women, most of whom had known each other before coming together to talk about the "ways of mankind." They were participating in a novel educational experience rather than playing bridge, watching TV,

going to the movies, or engaging in some other choice from the wide range of opportunities available in the community for leisure time activities.

This group was one of almost one hundred such groups that met regularly - usually in homes - during the WAYS OF MANKIND experiment, carried on in San Bernardino, California, from April to the middle of June, 1953.

JUST ANOTHER DISCUSSION GROUP?

The WAYS OF MANKIND Experiment represented a new departure in informal educational programs for adults. It was an initial exploration to determine whether it is possible - and practical - to mesh together in one powerful educational movement several elements which have never before been combined. Specifically, the experiment had these distinguishing characteristics:

1. Groups of people met regularly for nine weeks to listen to an outstanding radio program and then to discuss it. This was the first sustained combination of a radio program and discussion groups in the United States.

2. A large daily newspaper - the San Bernardino Sun-Telegram - cooperated by printing weekly, in advance of the broadcast, "discussion guides." These were supplementary articles on the same subject as the broadcast, followed by questions designed to stimulate discussion.

3. Most of the groups were natural "friendship groups" consisting of people who enjoyed each other and found the experience a worthwhile substitute for other things they might have been doing . (Very few groups were of the formal type with strangers brought together under a trained discussion leader.) This is a virtually untried method for organizing discussion groups. It offers an exciting new opportunity for extending adult education to people not normally reached by other methods.

4. The men and women who organized these home discussion groups were chiefly people without previous experience in leading discussion. Yet the meetings were, according to competent observers, vital, penetrating in the depth they reached, and achieved a higher degree of participation than is usual except for the most seasoned discussion group.

PURPOSES OF THE EXPERIMENT

The questions which this initial exploration sought to answer were many. In a broad general way, the hope was to discover ways to employ radio, TV and other powerful mass media to strengthen rather than to weaken the position of the individual in a democratic society. Could the mass communication "gimmicks" that are accused of creating a mass mind work instead to develop strong, independent thinking citizens of a free society? (The answer to this question was a resounding "Yes.")

More specifically, the experiment sought information and answers to questions which would be valuable in future, more extensive attempts to tie group discussion and mass media together.

1. Could and would radio and newspaper - two of the most powerful means of mass communication - work together in a joint educational program?

2. Would people form discussion groups on their own initiative to read the newspaper articles and listen to the programs?

3. If so, what kinds of people would take the lead? What kinds of people would come and where would they meet? What different organizational approaches to forming groups would turn up?

4. Would the groups formed last the full nine weeks or wither away after the initial excitement died down?

5. What kinds of discussions would these groups hold, lacking trained leaders? Would quality of the discussion have to be sacrificed in order to achieve quantity? (The assumption was that this would be true; the results were a happy contradiction.)

SCENE OF THE EXPERIMENT

The area chosen for the experiment was the city of San Bernardino, California, and the surrounding towns and countryside in the San Bernardino Valley. This area

is a natural geographic unit, rimmed by high mountains, and lying about forty miles inland from the Los Angeles Metropolitan area of Southern California. It is a community of communities transitional from an agricultural (citrus orchards and vineyards) to a machine and distribution type economy. The city of San Bernardino has a population of seventy-six thousand; the metropolitan area, one hundred and thirty-five thousand; and the San Bernardino Valley area exposed to the program, upwards of two hundred and fifty thousand. San Bernardino has been a lusty frontier town and is only beginning to turn to the critical examination of its future, emphasis on its cultural progress, and the development of harmony among its diverse population.

San Bernardino is one of the eleven cities participating in the Test Cities Project of the Fund for Adult Education. San Bernardino Valley College (a public, tax-supported junior college) cooperates with the Fund in this project and has created the Community Education Project as the administrative arm of the College to carry on this work. The Community Education Project had the responsibility for the WAYS OF MANKIND Experiment.

MATERIALS USED IN THE WAYS OF MANKIND EXPERIMENT

The experiment was built around a radio series bearing the common name of Ways of Mankind. The series consisted of thirteen programs, each of a half hour's duration, developed by the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, under a grant from the Fund for Adult Education. Dr. Walter Goldschmidt, anthropologist, University of California at Los Angeles, had over-all responsibility for developing the radio series. Nine of these programs were chosen for the Experiment.

The series constituted an introduction to basic anthropology. Educational in nature, the programs also represented American radio at its best. They were skilfully done, highly dramatic, interest-sustaining, and executed with humor and the light touch of top radio craftsmanship. Each program is different in format and

deals with a universal theme common to all peoples - those of ancient civilizations as well as such different contemporary civilizations as the American, the Chinese and the people of the South Sea Islands.

The themes used in the Experiment and their respective titles are

1. "A Word in Your Ear" -- a study in language.
2. "Stand-In for a Murderer" -- a study in culture.
3. "Survival" -- a study in technology.
4. "Desert Soliloquy" -- a study in education.
5. "Home Sweet Home" -- a study in family.
6. "When Greek Meets Greek" -- a study in values.
7. "The Case of the Sea Lion Flippers" -- a study in ethics.
8. "Legend of the Long House" -- a study in authority.
9. "Museum of Man" -- a summary.

Nine newspaper articles - each approximately 1500 words long - were specially written by Dr. Goldschmidt for this Experiment. Each article gave additional information about the subject treated in the radio program it was designed to accompany. Questions for discussion, printed at the end of each article, were developed by a volunteer group working through the Community Education Project.

TIMING THE EXPERIMENT

The Experiment came as the last major activity during the first year of the work of the Community Education Project in San Bernardino. It was a climax for the preceding discussion programs and provided a quick way of diffusing the interest developed by participants in those previous programs throughout the entire community.

INITIATING THE EXPERIMENT

The idea of the WAYS OF MANKIND Experiment originated with the staff of the Fund for Adult Education. Development of the program became the responsibility of Mr. Glen Burch, director of the Fund's Experimental Discussion Project. The Fund

suggested the experiment to Dr. Eugene Johnson, coordinator of the Community Education Project in San Bernardino. The Community Education Project enthusiastically assumed responsibility for local direction of the experiment. The Fund made the sum of two thousand dollars available to San Bernardino for local promotional and incidental expenses.

First Steps.

Securing the cooperation of the San Bernardino Sun-Telegram - an outstanding newspaper and the only one serving the entire San Bernardino Valley - became the first task. This was arranged in an interview with Mr. James A. Guthrie, Sun-Telegram publisher. This publisher, with a long record of distinguished service to the community, listened to one of the programs and liked it. He visualized the possibility of developing new channels of communication for bringing important problems to the consideration of the people. As detailed later in this report, the Sun-Telegram gave generously of "white space" both to print the discussion guides and to carry news stories relating to the Experiment.

Radio Station KFXM was next approached as offering one of the best listening publics in the area. The station management auditioned the program and volunteered not only a choice and convenient listening time (8:30-9:00 p.m. Thursday) but agreed to aid in the promotion of listenership and individual participation.

The support of one other key organization was deemed essential. This was the Chamber of Commerce, which auditioned one of the programs at a breakfast meeting of its Board of Directors. After listening to a presentation of the whole philosophy behind the Experiment, with particular attention to its significance as a new communication technique, the Chamber gave enthusiastic endorsement to the Experiment and aided considerably in its local promotion.

Thus the Fund for Adult Education joined with the San Bernardino Sun-Telegram, the Lee Brothers Broadcasting Corporation (KFXM), the San Bernardino Chamber of

Commerce, and San Bernardino Valley College's Community Education Project in a significant Experiment of national interest.

PROMOTING THE PROGRAM

All the promotional effort had two main goals - to interest large numbers of people in listening to the program, and to build up attendance at a special PREVIEW of the Experiment, held two days prior to the first broadcast. While widespread publicity was given to the importance of organizing discussion groups, the Preview was looked to as the chief method of actually stimulating people to commit themselves to the organizing of groups. (Details on the PREVIEW are given in a subsequent section of this report.)

The promotional campaign included these elements: (1) individual presentations to key individuals and groups; (2) a large banner across the main street of town announcing the program and inviting people to attend the preview; (3) a newspaper and radio publicity and advertising campaign; (4) preparation and distribution of a slick paper brochure describing the experiment in detail; (5) publicity releases to house organs of local organizations; (6) an informal build-up by interested people; and (7) the PREVIEW itself.

Of these promotional techniques, the newspaper and radio campaign and the distribution of the brochure may be of special interest to readers of this report. The Community Education Project bought 564 inches of display advertising space in the San Bernardino Sun-Telegram and lsser amounts in small weeklies and dailies in nearby communities. The advertising copy was prepared jointly by the advertising department of the Sun-Telegram, the Community Education Project, and the Valley College faculty member who handles publicity for the College.

The newspaper advertising was broken into three phases: (1) a "teaser" campaign to create interest, leading up to the release of the major advertising. Using the Experiment's initials - W O M - small three by five inch ads, appearing in several places in the paper each day for a period of ten days, gave successively more

information each day about the program. This culminated in the release of an 80 inch (almost a half page) ad on the Friday night before the Preview. Slightly smaller ads appeared morning and evening for the next four days (except for Saturday evening) with the last one appearing the evening of the Preview itself. On the Sunday before the Preview a special ad appeared in the Society Section, especially inviting the ladies to attend.

The third phase of the advertising began the night before the first broadcast. Another 80 inch ad announced the first program - "A Word in Your Ear." The next two radio programs were supported by 40 inch ads the day of the broadcast, and subsequent programs by a 15 inch ad on the day of the broadcast itself.

In addition to the advertising, the Sun-Telegram gave generously of its news columns to articles about the Experiment.

Radio advertising consisted of 50 floating spots on each of two local stations for four days leading up to the Preview and for the two days intervening between that and the first broadcast. In addition Radio Station KFXM, which carried the program, gave running publicity to it for the week preceding the Preview. Spot announcements consisted of a short excerpt from the first program (the wolf call from "A Word in Your Ear") together with pertinent details as to time and place.

The slick paper brochure was distributed not only to the mailing list which the Community Education Project had developed throughout its first year, but to a variety of other "natural" community centers. Bulk supplies were placed with the libraries, book stores, council of churches, P-TA's, Chamber of Commerce, laundromats, certain filling stations, and certain coffee counters in drugstores and cafes known to be gathering places. Key individuals were also given copies to distribute to their contacts. A delay at the printers prevented as widespread an advance distribution as had been desired.

THE PREVIEW

The Preview, held in the Valley College auditorium two nights prior to the first broadcast, was arranged with recruiting of group organizers clearly in mind. Arrangements were handled largely by a volunteer committee of the Community Education Project, consisting chiefly of people who had participated in previous discussion groups arranged by the Project.

The agenda of the Preview was designed to produce the maximum audience participation. The total program was explained, Dr. Goldschmidt described the development of the radio series, and excerpts from several of the programs were played.

Eight people, drawn from participants in previous discussion programs, staged a demonstration of a home discussion group in action. It was announced that an album containing all of the Ways of Mankind recordings would be awarded at the end of the series to the first ten groups to (1) organize, (2) register with the Community Education Office,(3) continue to exist throughout the series, and (4) submit weekly evaluations of the programs. Finally,the entire audience was divided into small buzz groups of six or seven people to formulate unanswered questions about forming home discussion groups. Reporters from these buzz groups came to the stage and presented their questions to a panel of "experts" (persons with considerable previous experience in discussion groups.)

At the conclusion of the meeting, special manuals giving detailed instructions on how to organize Ways of Mankind listen-and-talk groups were distributed to all interested persons. On the way out of the auditorium those intending to organize groups were invited to register their groups and thus become eligible for the prizes.

The Preview generated a remarkable amount of enthusiasm and audience participation was almost one hundred per cent. Subsequent analysis showed that with the exception of a chain of groups organized by the County March of Dimes Committee, all group organizers were people who attended the Preview. The importance of this

meeting - and all the advance work that preceded it - cannot be overemphasized. It was here that people became personally involved and adopted the Experiment as their own.

GROUPS IN ACTION

Many of the people who helped create community enthusiasm for the program and many of those who became group organizers were persons who had participated in previous discussion groups, set up with the assistance of the Community Education Project. This leadership potential of the program is one of its most valuable features. It offers opportunities for people who have already emerged as leaders to develop into more mature leaders and it is a way of recruiting and training leaders for future programs.

Detailed records were kept on as many groups as it was possible to maintain contact with. These records yield valuable information pertaining to group size, method of organization which brought the groups together, quality of the discussion, kind of meeting places, duration of the group, reasons for disintegration (where this occurred), and other interesting aspects of the Experiment. These are summarized briefly below.

Statistics on the groups.

In all, 97 groups were reported. Thirty-four of these emerged from the Preview meeting. The balance (63) were organized by the County March ofDimes Committee which saw in the Experiment a unique opportunity for building firmer ties - during the dormant period of the Committee's work - among members of March ofDimes Committees in various communities throughout San Bernardino County. Statistics are not available for the number of people who participated in these March ofDimes groups, nor is other detailed information about them available. The data below, therefore, stem from only those groups registered directly with the Community Education Office. It is possible, of course, that other groups existed, unknown to the

Project Office since some individuals may not have cared to register their groups. Some evidence that this was true developed during the life of the Experiment.

In all, 402 individuals are known to have participated in the groups registered with the Project office. It is estimated that an additional five to six hundred participated in those organized by the March of Dimes.

The average size of the groups was twelve persons.

An estimated ten thousand persons listened regularly to the radio program. (Details on a radio survey appear later in the report.)

Of the thirty-four groups registered, twenty-three stayed together for the entire series, which lasted until the second week in June.

Organizing Principle.

Most of the groups met in private homes, and these ranged from very luxurious houses to very modest ones.

Three kinds of organizational principles were discovered: (1) natural "friendship" groups; (2) block groups; and (3) groups consisting of people drawn from the same formal organization (service club, P-TA, churches, etc.)

Of these, the "friendship" groups were the most successful from these standpoints: persistence of the group; growth in size; quality of discussion; spontaneity of participation; and personnal satisfaction expressed by the people involved. As used in this report, "friendship group" has a broader meaning than referring only to an existing group of friends. The term also includes people whom the organizer thought would enjoy each other. Usually these groups ripened rapidly into lasting "friendship" groups.

The block groups were the least successful. In all cases of those registered, the "block groups" disintegrated early. In some cases block groups were converted by the organizer into friendship groups. This had the effect of a blood transfusion in restoring vitality to the affected group.

The experiences of groups drawn from the ranks of the same formal organization were varied. In general, however, these groups lacked the intensity of involvement of the friendship groups and their discussions tended to drag. There were several outstanding groups in this category, however.

No attempt was made to organize groups under trained leaders and open to the general public in meeting places such as schools. These so-called "cross-sectional groups" rarely are that. Where they appear to be, case studies have shown they come chiefly from one social level with persons from other levels usually turning out to be social isolates more interested in being with people than in the actual subject of discussion.

While variables other than the organizing principle affected the success of all groups, some important inferences from the disparity between these three kinds of groups can be made. Sweeping generalizations on the basis of this one experience, of course, would be unwise, but these factors should be considered in planning future programs of this kind:

1. In friendship groups, there is a feeling of freedom and tolerance which frequently is lacking in other groups. People relax more easily with each other and talk more readily about controversial subjects. Members of this kind of group can be brought together more easily. Intellectual exercise becomes an enjoyable pastime. Research has also shown that fundamental attitude changes are more likely to occur in this kind of group than in others; for opinion tends to be a group product, shared by all group members, and a shift in the group norm is likely to be followed by shifts in individual opinion.

2. Block groups (consisting of people living in the same block or immediate neighborhood) are not natural groups and in this Experiment did not tend to develop into natural groups. The reasons for this are varied but some contributing factors can be identified. In a modern urban setting, friendship ties are only by accident

on a neighborhood basis. Friendship ties are more likely to develop on the basis of job, church, acticity, or organizational contacts than on the basis of where people's homes are located. During the Experiment, Ways of Mankind block groups had to compete with these other stronger, existing ties for the time and attention of people in the block, many of whom were virtually strangers to each other. This competition proved insurmountable. Furthermore, block groups tended to inherit whatever frictions and animosities may have previously developed among neighbors, and this inhibited discussion, naturally enough. It should be noted, however, that no block groups were attempted in what may be termed "homogeneous neighborhoods" - neighborhoods where people felt a strong sense of identification with each other on the basis of poverty, race, or ethnic background or other factors. Where these factors are associated with distinct neighborhoods block groups might possibly succeed.

3. Members of groups organized from ranks of the same formal organization sometimes appeared to attend more from a sense of duty than from strong personal desire. Their participation frequently was both intermittent and perfunctory.

Backgrounds of group members

Members of the same "friendship" groups tended to have some common bond which enabled them to identify easily with the total group. Usually, but not always, this was social-economic level. For example, consider the membership of these groups:

Group One: Doctors, lawyers, very successful businessmen, persons holding responsible executive positions in business establishments or governmental agencies, and their wives.

Group Two: Carpenter, garage mechanic, store clerk, airplain repair welder, and their wives.

Professional interest also tended to bring people together. Two groups primarily of school teachers and librarians were reported.

An especially interesting and successful group was composed of people who had in common a well-developed aversion to racial and religious prejudice, its members believing that people should be accepted on their own merits without regard to artificial differences. This group included Caucasians and Negroes; Catholics, Protestants and Jews; and Mexican-Americans. The occupational background of these people varied extremely, including a plumber, a lawyer, a school teacher, a domestic worker, grocery store owner, a retired business man, and a P-TA leader.

It is essential in attempting to organize groups on a natural "friendship" basis to understand the importance of identification; it is the key to success. As stated above, identification will usually be on the basis of social-economic background, but other factors - as the Experiment demonstrated - may sometimes prevail for some people.

In general, an analysis of the kinds of people in Ways of Mankind groups revealed that most of them came from white collar, business, and professional groups. One major insight clarified by the Experiment, therefore, is that promotion for future programs of this kind must emphasize involving more people from a wider range of population segments at the early, interest building stage. Of particular importance is it to identify those individuals who appear to have prestige and natural followings in their own social groups. These will frequently be individuals whose names never appear in the newspapers and are generally unknown in the community at large. For example, if it is desired to reach the employees of a shop, mill or store, it is more important to find out whom these employees regard as leaders in their daily life and to interest these leaders than it is to interest the manager, owner or foreman. It is desirable, of course, to reach these people too, but they are not always the best way to reach the bulk of the employees. Careful study of each situation is the only road to success. There is no magic formula.

Geographic spread.

Groups existed in all the communities in the immediate San Bernardino area. In the city itself, a spot map showed that the majority of the groups were in areas where the homes of successful business and professional people are located. This could be expected from the analysis of occupational backgrounds of groups members given above.

Meeting places.

With few exceptions, groups met in private homes. The same group usually rotated around among the homes of its members, although some groups met always in the same home. Exceptions to the home as a meeting place were two groups in schools, two in churches, and one in a clubhouse.

Age level.

Data were not collected on the age level. Observation, however, indicated that most groups appeared to range between thirty and fifty. There were exceptions to this and one group included three persons over seventy.

Surprisingly, high school students enjoyed the broadcasts as much as adults. Teachers in several high schools gave class assignments based on the program and reported good results. There were also several reports of high school and college-age students meeting voluntarily to listen to the broadcasts.

Observations on the discussion.

Periodic visits were made to ten of the groups selected for more careful study. The observers of these groups were all people with extensive experience in group discussion. These observer teams met before the visitations for briefings and immediately afterward to compare findings. Among their general conclusions were these:

1. Discussion appeared to be more vital in the friendship-type group than among the others.

2. The discussions were amazingly stimulating and achieved penetrating insight into the problems.

3. All members participated in the discussion.

4. The discussions progressed effectively without trained leaders. It had not been necessary to sacrifice quality for quantity.

5. One or more group members usually played the role of keeping the discussion on the general track. This was a spontaneous development, seldom consciously directed.

The members exhibited a high degree of personal enjoyment. When queried as to their satisfaction, they were almost unanimous in their enthusiasm for the experience.

GROUP DISINTEGRATION

Eleven groups that started failed to reach the finish line. Limitations of budget, time and energy prevented gathering data which would establish clearly the reasons for disintegration in each case. Very limited interviewing, however, revealed the following causes:

1. The block groups, as previously discussed, proved too weak a foundation to build on. Of the four groups started, two broke up completely, and two were converted to more natural "friendship" groups.

2. Competition of other activities in which people had previously engaged reasserted itself after the initial flush of excitement over the Experiment had died down. Some people apparently found the weekly attendance too exacting in its demands on their time. They preferred to watch TV, go to other meetings, or engage in other activities which previously had engrossed them.

3. Poor radio reception in some areas where groups had organized discouraged the group members after one or two meetings and they disbanded.

4. One group broke up following the death of one of its leading members in a tragic airplane crash.

REACTION TO THE MATERIALS

Radio programs.

Group members expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the radio series. The most enthusiastic response was to these individual programs: "A Word in Your Ear", "When Greek Meets Greek", and "Survival."

The least enthusiasm was shown for "Stand-in for a Murderer" and "The Case of the Sea Lion Flippers."

The radio programs, in the judgment of group members, fill their dual role admirably - that of providing a common fund of information and a dramatic stimulus to discussion.

Newspaper articles.

The newspaper articles were read in advance by only about fifty per cent of the group members. Those who had read them tended to rate them as "helpful" but not "indispensable."

Reactions to the questions designed for discussion were so varied as to permit no generalizations. Some groups rated the questions "indispensable" while other groups said they made no contribution at all. The questions were used by approximately 50 per cent of the groups, the others preferred to follow their own bent.

It is obvious that the role of the newspaper in an experiment of this kind needs to be re-thought. In retrospect, it appears that the straight essay type presentation is not the most effective use of the newspaper for mass communication of ideas. The possibility of using the printed page to present a welding of line drawings and text should be examined. A less formal or a "featurized" approach in the writing of supporting articles might produce more readers. A society or gossip column coverage of the total program might prove very rewarding. In general, it now appears that newspaper space could be best employed for purposes other than supplying data paralleling that carried by the broadcast. The press can build

interest, recruit, and direct original activities, but it must be considered a questionable source of straight discussion data in this type of operation.

RADIO SURVEY

A survey to determine the size of the radio listening public not participating in discussion groups as such was carried on during the seventh broadcast in the series. The sample consisted of one per cent of the 26,000 names listed in the San Bernardino city telephone directory. A corps of volunteers was recruited and trained to conduct the survey.

During the broadcast a total of 260 calls were made to residences within the city limits; 183 were completed. 109 homes were watching one of seven TV channels receivable in the area, 22 were listeneding to radio. Of the 22 radio listening homes, 10 were listening to the "Ways of Mankind" program. 19/other persons answering had listened to previous "Ways of Mankind" broadcasts and could identify individual programs. 23 more persons expressed some familiarity with the series but were rather hazy when asked for specifics. In no case was anyone identified with a discussion group contacted.

Running these data through one radio survey formula, we will note that the "Ways of Mankind" broadcast captured roughly 9.2% of the total radio and television sets in use. On the other hand if we "hooperize" the radio sets-in-use figure alone, we discover that the program had built itself a 44.4% share of the radio listening audience. This, in the face of the program competition of three separate (and with good reception) national network stations (two in Los Angeles, one local) plus the local fare of eight independent stations.

A number of conclusions can be supported directly by these figures. First of all that there is an audience for well-produced educational radio, whether or not the programs are shored up with organized receptor groups. What portion of this audience was attracted by the extensive promotion given the "Ways of Mankind" series, what portion grew out of previous listening habits, or dial twisting encounter with a given broadcast is impossible to assess.

As concerns the San Bernardino area, it can be seen that television has long since outstripped radio in becoming a major source of at-home evening entertainment. (The Community Education Project at San Bernardino Valley College is now planning to develop a TV series, using the techniques of the "Ways of Mankind" experiment.)

Of course the method of survey, the sample selected, and the very mode of questioning can all be challenged. However it would seem that the formula applied (the selection of each 100th residential telephone listed) and the number of calls made, would compare more than favorably with the performance of commercial radio listening survey teams that from time to time have been employed to investigate listenership in San Bernardino.

Projecting the one percent sample to the total population of San Bernardino, a listening audience of roughly 2,500 is obtained. Since the population in the area covered by the experiment is approximately four times this, a very rough projection of the San Bernardino sample yields an estimated listening audience of 10,000 people who enjoyed the "Ways of Mankind" program. It might be pointed out that the sample, if it errs, is on the conservative side. It obviously does not include the people who were away from their homes because they were participating in discussion groups. Nor does it include people who may have listened to a rebroadcast of the program on Sunday afternoons. (The rebroadcasting was arranged for people who could not get the program in the evening but could during the day because of differences in the transmitting angle of the station.) A third factor was the mail response to the program. Mail response was considerably higher from communities where TV reception is non-existent than in San Bernardino where TV reception is good in most parts of the city. The radio audience was unquestionably greater in the non-TV areas, but it was impossible to check this.

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

Weekly Report Sheets. These were submitted by most of the groups registered. The sheets furnished data on the quality of the discussion, the topics discussed,

attendance, reaction to the materials employed in the experiment, and special problems that arose. At first these were filled out by the group organizer. The procedure was subsequently changed and the entire grouptook the last part of the discussion period to react to the questions on the weekly evaluation form. Most of them reported that this was an enjoyable experience.

Meetings with group organizers.

Two of these were held during the course of the experiment to clarify the reactions on the weekly report form, to establish areas of agreement among the groups regarding the Experiment, and to develop additional information beyond that recorded on the weekly reports.

Observation..

Ten groups were visited two or more times during the course of the experiment by competent observers who were specially briefed for this task. Their reports have been previously summarized.

A final meeting at the conclusion of the series.

This meeting, held after the middle of June, was attended by about 200 people who had participated in groups or had heard the program on the air. The albums of recordings of the "Ways of Mankind" series were distributed to the groups that had won them. A remarkable degree of enthusiasm was exhibited in this final meeting. Buzz groups were formed to obtain general reactions to the Experiment as a whole. There were repeated calls for a new series of programs at a later time.

REACTIONS TO THE TOTAL EXPERIMENT

From the long list of varied reactions to the Experiment, these stand out as characteristic of the feelings ofmost of the people who participated:

1. They regarded the entire Experiment as a very successful undertaking and requested similar programs in near future.

2. A greatly increased understanding of American society in all its complexities was reported by practically all participants.

3. The chief enjoyment came from the people they were with. Over and over again, this was cited as the factor most enjoyed. Several school teachers who participated in one group reported they decided to stay in the community rather than accept offers of employment elshwere, because they enjoyed the friendship of the people brought together through their "Ways of Mankind" group.

4. The participants rediscovered, in many cases, radio as a valuable way of spending leisure time.

5. The stimulus to think. Many people reported they had "gotten out of the habit" of thinking or talking about serious matters. They found the intellectual exercise enjoyable. One woman said:

> "Before this experiment started I used to talk to my neighbor over the fence on my left about her flower garden. I used to talk with my neighbor on the right over the fence about our children's diets and the condition of their "b.m.'s"! Now at last I have something I really want to talk about."

6. A growing appreciation of the people of other cultures. One man reported he had never before "understood anything about the people of other societies." He had thought them "different" and therefore, "odd".

CONCLUSIONS

These appear to be the main experiences gained from the "Ways of Mankind" Experiment.

1. Radio and newspaper can work effectively together to stimulate the organization of discussion groups and to nurture those which come into existence. The long-cherished dream of integrating mass media and discussion groups is practical.

2. Natural friendship circles appear to offer the best basis for organizing discussion groups when this kind of "remote control" approach is employed.

3. It is not necessary to sacrifice the <u>quality</u> of discussion in order to achieve <u>quantity</u>. A carefully selected radio program, designed to touch off the natural well-springs of human interest and concern will lead to discussion as vital and penetrating as that of a carefully organized graduate seminar.

4. Publicity and advertising alone will not bring discussion groups into existence. An enormous amount of leg work and the careful involvement of people who are leaders in various population segments is necessary. Publicity should be directed toward discovering these leaders, enlisting their help, and making easier their job of attracting interest within their prestige circles. There is a two-step process in the use of mass media to promote a program: (a) The material must arouse the interest of opinion leaders in various community groups; and (b) the opinion leader must bring the material actively to the attention of his group.

5. In enlisting people at the early stage, it is important to see the community in termsof its major population segments. Identification of people with each other - usually, but not always on the basis of social-economic background- is the correct basis for slicing up a community into population segments.

6. The newspaper can best be used to stimulate interest in the program, keep groups in touch with each other, develop a feeling of camaraderie, and to dramatize and interpret the program. Material designed to supplement the radio broadcast can be distributed separately by mail or in bulk supplies to groups which register. Sources of supplementary material, to be found in libraries and other places, can also be pointed out to grupp members.

7. Home discussion groups can function effectively without trained discussion leaders. Trained leaders can perhaps best be used as resource persons to sit in occasionally with groups and to help them analyze their difficulties.

8. Finally, a program of this sort should <u>not</u> be an isolated activity. It draws on the leadership developed in other kinds of liberal adult education programs and becomes itself a major way of developing additional leadership. It needs to be set firmly in the context of a growing and broadening community-wide program.

The "Ways of Mankind" Experiment was an initial and limited reconnaissanceinto a no-man's-land of education. Enough evidence was gathered to reveal that an exciting opportunity of almost unbelievable proportions awaits those individuals and institutions who will grasp it.

Eugene I. Johnson and John E. Harder

Scanned from the National Association of Educational Broadcasters Records
at the Wisconsin Historical Society as part of
"Unlocking the Airwaves: Revitalizing an Early Public and Educational Radio Collection."

A collaboration among the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities,
University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Communication Arts,
and Wisconsin Historical Society.

Supported by a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant from
the National Endowment for the Humanities

MITH MARYLAND INSTITUTE FOR TECHNOLOGY IN THE HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WISCONSIN UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE Humanities

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication/collection do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.